



Immigrant Advisory Table

MINUTES

Tuesday, February 27th | 6-8pm | Abbotsford Community Services

Present	Regrets
Arashdeep Sandhu	Sharath Anaparthi
Rajbir Virk	Adlin Babantaj
Seydou Keita	
Steve (Sang Don) Lee	
Fathima Nawaz	
Adaly Molina	
Sherry Wang	
Lilliana Harvard	
Elizabeth Angaleni	
Lia Bishop	
Eyerusalem Abebe	

MEETING OPENING AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Land Acknowledgement & Welcome
- Introduction and Overview of Abbotsford Community Services (ACS) including agency departments, MIIS and Diversity Education.
- Powerpoint overview of governance structure: Executive Team and Project Management.
- Roundtable Introductions: all attendees share their names, background, why they chose to join the Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT) and what they hope to contribute to the Table.

APPROVAL

Agenda reviewed and approved.



NEW BUSINESS

ALIP Governance & Action Plans:

- ALIP is a federally funded project that aims to develop strategies to help newcomers integrate successfully in all forms of community life.
- ALIP members collaborate in Council meetings and working groups to devise projects, indirect services and action plans at the local community level.
- LIP strategies differ across different LIPs throughout Canada. Depending on their unique geographical locations and demographic makeup, LIPs devise projects/activities through Working Groups (WG) that respond to the needs and gaps of their particular community. Abbotsford's LIP includes 3 core working groups: Social Integration, Labour Market and Research, Practice & Policy. Working groups are self-governing, report back to Council on progresses and their directions/objectives may change with time
 - For example, we are creating a Communication Strategy which could act as an ad hoc group.
- ALIP members come from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds and represent a variety of sectors in Abbotsford, including Fraser Health, University of the Fraser Valley, Chamber of Commerce, the City of Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley Regional Library. Currently we are missing representation from certain sectors, namely business, agriculture, faith groups.
 - *IAT Member Question:* Staff should connect with Chamber of Commerce to address the lack of representation from industry and agriculture. Chamber of Commerce hosted a seminar regarding employment for newcomers so the Chamber might have great connections to tap into for new partnerships.

Purpose of the Immigrant Advisory Table

- Overview of the purpose of IAT and the role of members: IAT works in parallel to ALIP and its purpose is to provide advice and guidance on the strategies devised by ALIP Council and Working Groups.
- IAT is a group made up of foreign-born residents from diverse backgrounds. IAT members have the lived experience of being immigrants in Canada and thus, have invaluable knowledge and insight to help steer ALIP strategies and ensure the work of ALIP is relevant to newcomer needs.
 - Lia gives an overview of the cultural diversity of Abbotsford. Abbotsford is the 3rd diverse city in Canada. Approximately 26% of Abbotsford residents are from visible



minority backgrounds and this is growing. The city welcomed 1300 new permanent residents in 2013 only.

- Lia presents the matrix structure of both ALIP and IAT to attendees. The project management team (secretariat) supports both groups. The co-chairs from both groups will act as bridges for communication between the groups and might meet by themselves outside of regular meetings.

IAT Terms of Reference Overview- Lia Bishop

Main Discussion Points

1. TOR is a living document: Members can email project staff with changes they would like to be made on the document outside of regular meeting hours and project staff will document all changes and bring it to the meeting.
- Changes to do TOR will be known and agreed upon by members before formalized.
2. Schedule of Meetings: The Table would like to meet once every month for the next few months to ensure momentum is not lost. If this does not work, they will reconsider a different schedule. 6 – 8pm works for most members currently.
Action Step: Project staff to send optional meeting dates as early as possible so that members can book it off at work.
3. Agenda Setting: Agenda, Guest Speakers and Discussion will be organized through the Executive Team (co-chairs and project management).
Project Management to be present at meetings to take minutes; PM will work with co-chairs around logistical and administrative roles.
4. Communications Strategy: ALIP/IAT members are expected to promote materials and messages with the greater community. IAT members are interested in helping develop a communications plan – this conversation will continue.
5. Co-Chair Role: Co-Chairs work closely with Project Management staff in administration roles, such as developing and distributing meeting agendas, taking down minutes, booking meeting locations. They also attend ALIP Council meetings and report back to IAT.



Q&A Session

1. *Is project staff aware of OCP in Abbotsford. There is potential for knowledge sharing and connections. The City is an important asset.*

Yes, it would be great to invite them to a meeting and have them present on the work they are doing. The City is part of ALIP. Sue, the co-chair of ALIP, is an employee of the City. City Councillor Dave Loewen also sits on the ALIP council. However, it would definitely be very useful to connect with the OCP department; the OCP plan can inform the objectives and projects of IAT.

2. *Can we participate in the Working Groups? How do we let them know we would like to participate?*

You are encouraged to join any of the Working Groups. IAT can also establish its own working group depending on the projects, resources or ideas of the group.

3. *Are ALIP members also volunteers or it is a paid position?*

Just like IAT, ALIP members are also volunteers and receive no remuneration from ALIP funding.

4. *What is the connection between ALIP and IAT?*

IAT advises on the work ALIP is already doing. If IAT would like to start its own project, this is possible. The responsibility of communicating and exchanging information between the two groups lies with the co-chairs of both groups.

5. *How about research? Has ALIP done research?*

Research should respond to the immediate needs of newcomers and community gaps. ALIP has received small grant funding for research, including from Fraser Health. Other research activities could be creating “Fact Sheets” and/or information materials. Research requires funding and time in soliciting research funds. Compiling a list of resources and/or community-asset activities can also be considered research; it does not necessarily have to be academic in nature.

6. *What processes are in place to track immigration and newcomers in Abbotsford? Especially for those who never hear of ACS, are there systems in place to account for those who “fall through the cracks”?*

This is a question ALIP is currently working on as well, especially concerning people crossing the borders. ALIP is talking about developing a refugee response



protocol. This is why a communications plan would also be very important. Developing resources and tools is great but we also have to make sure we are marketing them so the community knows about programs.

Action Step: This topic should be an agenda item for next IAT meeting for us to discuss more in detail.

7. *How do you evaluate the work of ALIP? How do we know the work of ALIP/IAT has been effective?*

In the past, we've hired an evaluator to ensure there is no bias in our own evaluation. We also rely heavily on feedback, measuring impact, member feedback and educational impacts in the public.

Close 8:00pm